

SENATE—Wednesday, September 22, 1999

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rev. Craig Barnes, Washington, DC.

We are pleased to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rev. Craig Barnes, senior pastor, National Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, before any more work is done this day, before anyone stands up in leadership over the Nation, we bow our heads in humble confession that we are completely dependent upon You.

Even the greatest among us is but flesh, and lighter than a breath in Your holy presence. So use our leaders this day, not because they are necessary, but because in Your hands they can become instruments for building Your holy kingdom on Earth.

When our leaders are tempted to despair, give them Your hope. When they are hurt, give them Your protecting angels. And when they are discouraged, give them great visions and dreams of that coming day when, throughout the land, we shall all do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with You, our God. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BILL FRIST, a Senator from the State of Tennessee, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today the Senate will immediately begin debate on the Department of Defense authorization conference report with the vote on adoption ordered to take place at approximately 9:45 a.m.

Following the vote, the Senate will begin consideration of the VA-HUD appropriations bill. It is hoped that Senators who have amendments to the bill will work with the chairman and ranking member so that they may offer

those amendments in a timely fashion. Senators can expect votes throughout the day in an effort to make significant progress on this legislation.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 1606

Mr. WARNER. I understand there is a bill at the desk due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRIST). The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1606) to reenact chapter 12 of title 11, United States Code, and for other purposes.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, on behalf of the distinguished majority leader, I object to further proceedings on the bill at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the conference report accompanying S. 1059, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany S. 1059 to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for military activities of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 15 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form prior to the vote on the conference report.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the Senate worked well into the evening last night, and we had about an hour and a half of deliberations regarding this bill. We are prepared this morning, the distinguished ranking member and myself, to conclude that debate.

Once again, I pay my heartfelt tribute to my distinguished ranking member and the staff of the committee for a job well done. We have produced a work product in which I believe this institution can take great pride.

Mr. President, the Senate is a constant learning experience, and al-

though I have been privileged to have represented the Commonwealth of Virginia for some 21 years in the Senate, I experienced last night an event which I shall always remember. We had concluded our debate, and I was proceeding to do the wrapup on behalf of the majority leader, and when the Senate concluded its work, I was suddenly surrounded by the pages, shaking hands, and expressing their great appreciation. It then took me a minute to realize that we had concluded debate beyond the hour of 9 p.m., thereby foreclosing any requirement that they perform their homework. That was a tribute that I shall long remember.

The other experience last night was my distinguished good friend and ranking member, the senior Senator from Michigan, announcing that he would support this bill. I recognize it has been a serious struggle for him and others occasioned by the amendment on the bill regarding the reorganization of the Department of Energy.

I feel very strongly that the Senate did its duty on behalf of the country and put on that bill legislation in the course of the conference that is badly needed to reorganize that Department. I am confident the current Secretary has the ability within this statute to lead that Department, restructuring it in a manner that it can continue to serve the United States and at the same time protect the vital security matters that come before that Department.

The bill before us now marks a necessary turning point in reversing the dangerous trends that we have witnessed in our military after 15 years of declining defense spending. While the world has changed in many ways since the end of the cold war, what has not changed is that America's Armed Forces are bearing our commitments as they have always done. There are, however, limits to that commitment by the men and women who proudly serve in uniform. Our forces are clearly overstressed in commitments throughout the world, the most recent being East Timor, where there was clear justification for U.S. participation.

Over the past decade, our military manpower has been reduced by one-third, from 2.2 million to 1.4 million, and during this same period our troops have been involved in 50 military operations worldwide. As the force levels have been brought down, as the defense spending in that same period was brought down, up went the number of times that President Clinton and, indeed, President Bush sent our troops beyond our shores—50 times. Compare